THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SUNDAY • APRIL 16, 2023 • ₹12.00 • PAGES 26 • LATE CITY EDITION

Police arresting a suspect at the blast site in Japan's Wakayama | AP

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SMOKE BOMB THROWN AT JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER

Fumio Kishida was campaigning in Japan's Wakayama when a pipe-like object was thrown in his direction

OBJECT LANDS FEW FEET AWAY FROM KISHIDA

Footage by Japanese broadcaster NHK showed Kishida standing with his back facing the crowd when a silver, pipe-like object landed just a few feet away from him. His security detail sprung into action, pushing him away, seconds before a loud blast was heard and white smoke filled the air. Kishida was safely evacuated and went on to resume campaigning

24-YEAR-OLD SUSPECT IN POLICE CUSTODY

- A 24-year-old man was arrested at the scene. Reports said he threw a smoke or pipe bomb, possibly with a delayed fuse
- Kishida was campaigning for his party's candidate in a local election
- The incident comes as Japan is still dealing with the trauma of former prime minister Shinzo Abe's assassination last year | PTI

April 23

WHEN JAPAN WILL HOLD ELECTIONS TO LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

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TALKS FAIL, SHETTAR TO QUIT AS MLA TODAY

Will decide future course of action soon, says former chief minister

PRAMODKUMAR VAIDYA @ Hubballi, Bengaluru

FORMER CM and senior BJP leader Jagadish Shettar late on Saturday evening decided to resign as member of the legislative Assembly after talks with senior party leaders over allotting him a ticket from the Hubballi Central Assembly segment failed. Shettar has not spoken about his next move, but he could join Congress, sources said.

Emerging from a meeting with senior party leaders, Shettar announced that he would quit as MLA. He has already sought time with Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri and he is expected to resign on Sunday after reaching Sirsi. He expressed deep disappointment over the way the party treated him and said he faced a lot of humiliation within the party. He will announce his future course of action once he quits his MLA post, the sources said.

Shettar had earlier announced that he would decide his future course of action by Saturday evening. But he postponed it after BJP state election in charge Dharmendra Pradhan, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Union Minister Pralhad Joshi expressed to meet him. The leaders arrived at Shettar's residence by night and held a closed-door meeting for half-an-hour.

During the meeting, Shettar was told he would not be given the Hubballi-Dharwad Central ticket and any member of his family would be allowed to contest from the seat Hubballi-Dharwad Central seat which he has represented six times. If he is not happy with the offer, he would be made a governor of any state if he retires from active politics,. the sources said. But Shettar refused both the offers and asked the leaders the reason behind denying him the ticket. But the delegation did not have any answers it is said.

Shettar said that some forces within BJP wanted to corner him as he is the seniormost leader in the party after BS Yediyurappa and KS Eshwarappa retired from active politics. He said he knows who were behind such activities and he will reveal it at an appropriate time, he added. P4

CONG THIRD LIST OUT, SAVADI GETS ATHANI

As Congress released its third list of 43 candidates on Saturday, former DCM Laxman Savadi has been given the ticket to contest from Athani, which was denied to him by BJP, leading him to quit the party. Meanwhile, the Congress has kept the Hubballi-Dharwad Central seat vacant expecting former CM Jagadish Shettar to join the party. P4

Ajit Pawar readies to be next Maha CM

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

MAHARASHTRA CM Eknath Shinde appears to be on his way out, making way for NCP's **Ajit Pawar** as his successor in alliance with the BJP. With the Damocles' sword of the Supreme Court's defection verdict hanging over Shinde's head, the change of guard is just a matter of time.

Ajit is in a hurry to realise his dream of becoming CM. He has the support of 35-40 NCP lawmakers, so the anti-defection law will not kick in.

However, senior leaders in his camp want him to get party founder Sharad Pawar's consent so as to avoid the 2019 fiasco of forming a government with the BJP, which fell within 80 hours as the senior Pawar was not on board. "Sharad Pawar is reluctant to go with the BJP. He asked Ajit to take his own call, saying he (Sharad) was not willing to stigmatise his political career that is at its fag end by aligning with the saffron party. Ajit's supporters are aware that going against the party patriarch could mean political suicide because of Sharad Pawar's ability to sway the public mood," said a senior NCP leader.

The wary NCP MLAs have pressed Ajit to get Sharad Pawar's blessings. When Ajit went incommunicado on April 8, he had taken a chartered flight to Delhi to meet BJP leader Amit Shah to strike the final deal, sources said. "Party leaders Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare accompanied him to decide the distribution of portfolios," a source said.

Sources said the BJP has already sounded out Shinde. "BJP is in a difficult situation. The popularity of Uddhav Thackeray and his son Aditya has increased though they lost the party name and symbol. An internal BJP survey states the MVA would bag 33 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The BJP cannot afford to lose Maharashtra," said the source.

The BJP wants a Maratha face as CM since they comprise 35% of the electorate, hence the attempt to draw Ajit Pawar.

CONQUERING 50

Royal Challengers Bangalore batsman Virat Kohli raises his bat after scoring a half-century, during their IPL match against Delhi Capitals at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. RCB beat Delhi by 23 runs | VINOD KUMAR T

EXPRESS READ

Release 6 tmcft of water, K'taka tells M'rashtra

BELAGAVI: The Karnataka government has requested Maharashtra to release 3 TMC of water from the Warna/Koyna reservoir into the Krishna river, and 3 TMC of water from the Ujjaini reservoir into Bhima river to address drinking water needs of North Karnataka. In a letter, the Additional Chief Secretary, Water Resources Department, Karnataka informed the Maharashtra government that parts of North Karnataka -- Belagavi, Vijaypura, Bagalkot, Kalaburagi, Raichur, and Yadgir -- are facing acute drinking water shortage this summer.

ATIQ, BROTHER SHOT DEAD ON CAMERA

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

IN a brazen act, mafia don-turned-politician Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf Ahmed were shot dead on camera while being taken for medical check-up in Prayagraj on Saturday around 10 pm.

Their murders came two days after Atiq's son Asad, wanted in connection with the Umesh Pal murder case, was eliminated by the UP police in Jhansi in an encounter.

Three alleged assailants were arrested. A policeman was injured in the firing.

The attack happened after both the brothers arrived at the Prayagraj hospital. They got down from the police van and were taking media questions when an assailant put his weapon on Atiq's temple and pulled the trigger.

Atiq slumped to the ground and was followed by Ashraf. Viral videos of the attack showed an assailant pumping more bullets into the collapsed bodies. In all, around 10 shots were fired. The bullet-riddled bodies were soon taken away as tension gripped the area.

The horrific act was caught on camera as mediapersons were tailing the gangsters.

The assailants managed to intrude by allegedly posing as mediapersons, the police said.

Both Atiq and Ashraf had been brought from Gujarat jails to Prayagraj for questioning in the Umesh Pal case.

On March 2, Atiq had approached the Supreme Court claiming threat to his life.

An assailant putting his gun on the Atiq Ahmad's temple before shooting him dead

CAPF exam soon in 13 languages

AMIT MUKHERJEE @ New Delhi

DAYS after Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah, urging him to include Tamil as a language for the written exam in the recruitment for Central Armed Reserve Police Force personnel, the government on Saturday announced the Constable (General Duty) exam for CAPFs will be held in 13 regional languages.

From January 1 next year, in addition to Hindi and English, the question paper will also be set in Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Urdu, Punjabi, Manipuri, and Konkani.

The Union Home Ministry said the decision will result in lakhs of youth taking the CAPF exam in their regional language, which could improve their chances.

The MHA and Staff Selection Commission are expected to sign an addendum to the existing MoU to facilitate the conduct of the examination in multiple Indian languages.

Bommai's assets grow nearly 5x in 5 yrs

PRAMODKUMAR VAIDYA @ Hubballi

THE total assets of Chief Minister **Basavaraj Bommai** have grown close to five times in the last five years. Bommai, who filed his nomination paper to contest from the Shiggaon constituency on Saturday, declared the total value of his properties at Rs 28.94 crore, which was Rs 6.09 crore in 2018 when the last Assembly elections were held.

The value of his immovable properties has grown from Rs 3.77 crore to Rs 22.96 crore, which is over six times. Similarly, the value of movables increased from Rs 2.32 crore to Rs 5.98 crore. As per the affidavit filed before the Election Commission of India, Bommai has assets worth Rs 28,93,94,208 and liabilities of Rs 5,79,20,753. Also, under the column of Hindu Undivided Family, he has declared an inherited asset of Rs 20,77,41,231. So, the total assets declared by Bommai is Rs 49.70 crore.

While Bommai owns gold jewellery, bullion and valuable articles worth Rs 1.5 crore, his wife Chennamma has assets of Rs 78.83 lakh. He has non-agriculture land in Yelahanka and Bengeri of Hubballi, and agricultural land in Tarihal village on the Hubballi outskirts and at his ancestral village Kumadolli of Kundgol taluk. He also declared owning three commercial and four residential buildings.

Bommai, who was with his son Bharat, Public Works Minister CC Patil, and Haveri MP Shivakumar Udasi, filed the papers at the Shiggaon taluk office as the day was considered auspicious. He is expected to submit more papers on April 19 taking out a procession, which may be attended by BJP national president JP Nadda.

MADAL GETS BAIL

A special court on Saturday granted bail to Channagiri BJP MLA K Madal Virupakshappa in a graft case registered by the Lokayukta police over lack of breakthrough. "Virupakshappa was not arrested while receiving the bribe. Also, Madal's medical report shows he has heart disease," said the court. P3

POLL PUSH

All parties now on a hunt to woo migrant voters in border regions

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

WORKERS of prominent political parties have started knocking on the doors of voters in border villages and tribal hamlets to gather information on migrant labourers to make them come back and vote in favour of their candidates in the May 10 Assembly elections.

The parties and candidates foresee a keen contest in many constituencies on the border of Mysuru and Chamarajanagar districts, where migrant voters are in large numbers. The workers have started collecting details such as names of voters who have migrated from their villages and hamlets in search of work, their present workplaces, booth numbers, etc. They are also collecting details of such voters' political affiliation. Local leaders and village heads have been roped in by the parties to reach the migrant voters. They have been promised attractive wages, food, transport and other facilities.

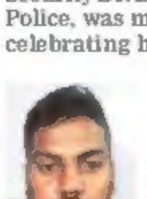
In Hanur Assembly constituency alone, more than 12,000 voters are working in textile mills at Tirupur in Tamil Nadu. Many are working in estates and farms in that state. Govinda of BG Doddi said many families from Budipadaga, Aradinapura, VS Doddi, Gundi Mole and other villages have migrated to other places in search of jobs. Workers of various parties have visited these villages and have prepared a list of such voters.

CONTINUED ON: P5

Man cuts cake on GF's b'day, slits her throat with the same knife

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 24-year-old woman, working in the Internal Security Division (ISD) of the Karnataka State Police, was murdered by her boyfriend after celebrating her birthday at his house near Laggere in Rajgopal Nagar police station limits.



The woman, Navya (24), could not celebrate her birthday on Tuesday as her boyfriend **Prashanth** (25) was not available and they cut the cake on Friday. Immediately after, Prashanth, suspecting her to be cheating on him, slit her throat with the same knife that was used to cut the cake. He stayed with Navya's body for the next five hours, unsure of what to do. He even contemplated chopping the body into pieces and dumping it, like in the murder of Shradha by Aftab Ameen Poonawalla in Delhi. But he decided against it as it was time consuming and surrendered in the evening. P3

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